

PER BV 2580 .R44 v.96-127

Neglected Arabia



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2015

NEGLECTED ARABIA

No. 118

JULY, AUGUST, SEPTEMBER

1921



ON THE BANKS OF THE EUPHRATES

CONTENTS

The Kibla: A Mecca Newspaper.....Rev. S. M. Zwemer, D.D.
Along the Tigris River.....Rev. H. A. Bilkert
The Influence of Christ on My Life...Faddagh bin Muhammad
The Moslem World: Advance Notice.
Missionary Personalia.

The Arabian Mission

TRUSTEES

Rev. Henry E. Cobb, D.D., <i>President.</i>	
Rev. J. P. Searle, D.D., <i>Vice-Pres.,</i>	Rev. E. G. Read, D.D.,
Rev. Lewis Francis, D.D.,	Mr. John Bingham,
Rev. T. H. Mackenzie, D.D.,	Mr. E. E. Olcott.

HONORARY TRUSTEES

W. A. Buchanan, Esq., London, England,
 Rev. James Cantine, D.D., Baghdad, Mesopotamia,
 Rev. S. M. Zwemer, D.D., LL.D., Holland, Mich.

OFFICERS

Rev. W. I. Chamberlain, Ph.D., *Corr. Sec'y*, 25 East 22d Street, N. Y.
 F. M. Potter, *Associate Secretary and Treas.*, 25 East 22d Street, N. Y.
 Rev. W. J. Van Kersen, *District Secretary*, Holland, Mich.

MISSIONARIES

Rev. and Mrs. James Cantine,	Baghdad, Mesopotamia,	Evangelistic Work.
Rev. and Mrs. S. M. Zwemer	Holland, Michigan,	On furlough.
Rev. and Mrs. F. J. Barny,	Basrah, Mesopotamia,	Evangelistic Work.
Rev. James E. Moerdyk,	Grand Rapids, Mich.,	On furlough.
Rev. and Mrs. J. Van Ess,	Basrah, Mesopotamia,	Educational Work.
Miss J. A. Scardefield,	Kuweit, P. G.,	Evang. and Med. Work.
Miss Fanny Lutton,	Sydney, N. So. Wales,	On furlough.
Rev. and Mrs. D. Dykstra,	Monroe, So. Dakota,	On furlough.
Dr. and Mrs. C. S. G. Mylrea,	Philadelphia, Pa.	On furlough.
Rev. and Mrs. G. J. Pennings,	Bahrein, P. G.,	Evang. and Educ. Work.
Rev. and Mrs. E. E. Calverley,	Kuweit, P. G.,	Evang. and Med. Work.
Dr. and Mrs. P. W. Harrison,	Bahrein, P. G.,	Medical Work.
Rev. and Mrs. G. D. Van Peursem,	Maskat, Arabia,	Evangelistic Work.
Mrs. Sharon J. Thoms,	Basrah, Mesopotamia,	Educational Work.
Miss Sarah L. Hosmon, M.D.,	Maskat, Arabia,	Medical Work.
Miss Charlotte B. Kellien,	Detroit, Michigan,	On furlough.
Rev. and Mrs. H. A. Bilkert,	Amara, Mesopotamia,	Evangelistic Work.
Miss M. C. Van Pelt,	Kuweit, P. G.,	Medical Work.
Dr. and Mrs. L. P. Dame,	Bahrein, P. G.,	Language Study.
Miss Ruth Jackson,	Westfield, N. J.,	Under appointment.
Miss Rachel Jackson,	Westfield, N. J.,	Under appointment.
Miss Cornelia Dalenberg,	South Holland, Ill.,	Under appointment.

Address all letters to Missionaries in the field, Via Bombay.

The Arabian Mission depends for its support and the extension of its work not on the treasury of the Board of Foreign Missions of the Reformed Church in America, though under its care and administration, but upon contributions specifically made for this purpose. The churches, societies and individuals subscribing are not confined to the Reformed Church. Members of other denominations are among its supporters and its missionaries. Regular gifts and special donations are invited from all who are interested in Mission work in Arabia. Regular contributors will be placed upon the mailing list for "Neglected Arabia." All contributions, or applications for literature or information, should be sent to "THE ARABIAN MISSION," 25 East 22nd Street, New York.

NEGLECTED ARABIA

Missionary News and Letters

Published Quarterly

FOR PRIVATE CIRCULATION AMONG THE FRIENDS OF
THE ARABIAN MISSION

The Kibla: A Mecca Newspaper

REV. S. M. ZWEMER, D.D.

THE by-products of the great world war have not yet been catalogued or indexed. The mingling of races and religions on the battlefields of three continents, the rising tides of passion and prejudice and propaganda, the impact of the best and the worst of our western civilization on the best and the worst of Islamic culture—who can measure the effect of all this on the future? The Moslem press in Egypt and in India suffered kaleidoscopic changes because of the censorship, but retained its vitality and enterprise to a remarkable degree in spite of paper shortage and the enforced exile of many an editor. Before the war, Mecca, the religious capital of Arabia and of Islam, had no newspapers, no telephones, no water system or sanitation, no postage stamps, no national flag. The Turk ruled as far as he was able and that meant stagnation. With the Arab revolt and from the day the King of Hejaz joined the Allies, Jiddah and Mecca began to feel the throb of a new life—aeroplanes, wireless and telephonic communication, Ford cars on the road to the Holy City, a new government, new army regulations, new schools, harbor improvements, and of course a newspaper.

I became a subscriber from the first and have read with astonishment, sometimes with amusement, the news of the world through the green spectacles of the Hejaz—the Holy Land of Arabia—for four years.

The paper is called *Al Kibla*, “The True Direction for Prayer,” because all the Moslem world prays toward the Beit Allah or Kaaba. The number before me happens to be number 477 of the fifth year and is dated on one side of the title page, Thursday, 13th Sha’aban 1339 A.H. On the other side in western (Christian) era as April 21, 1921. It is the official organ of the Hejaz kingdom and at one time aspired to be the official organ of the new Caliphate, but this aspiration was doomed to failure. It is printed bi-weekly at the Government Press and has never outgrown its modest four-page dimensions.

Even the advertising columns however, are eloquent of conditions in the Forbidden City and the fact that well-known “infidels” like myself can send in letters to the editor and remit subscriptions is suggestive of a new day. The entire last page is devoted to a notice that could

only appear in one paper in the whole world and shows the tragedy of the annual pilgrimage as nothing else could do. It is a notice of the effects and personal baggage of a list of Javanese pilgrims who died unknown during the past week. All their little belongings were turned over to the Dutch Consulate at Jiddah and their relatives or friends may here find record of how the search for peace and for God ended. The list contains twenty-two names, e.g.; "The Hajji Idris from Batavia Java, conducted by the Meccan guide Hassan, found dead with the following possessions: one plain girdle, one ornamental girdle, one headdress, one black garment, one rattan suitcase, but no passport papers." At the end of the long list I notice the words, "to be continued!" The mortality among pilgrims from India and Malaysia is notorious.

The leading articles in this issue are as always political. The first is a vigorous reply to certain criticisms of the Hejaz government that appeared in a Malay paper and ends with an appeal to religious motives—"how could any such things take place in Holy Territory or on the part of the direct descendants of Mohammed the Prophet of God?"

The second is entitled *Reckless Diplomacy* and reviews the failures of western diplomacy and politics since the vain promises of world peace and self-determination at Versailles. "You cry peace, peace, and there is no peace. Look at Ireland, Poland and Russia, Palestine and Egypt! If that is the result of western civilization and culture in the 20th Century, then let us all praise Allah, we who go barefooted or in sandals, that we are free from such a terrible burden of horrors. And in conclusion all we can say is this, Allah has the final decision and He is the best of all judges on the bench."

Alas, it is the impact of this wicked western world also that is the occasion for a "notice" in the next column asking all parents to present their infants for immediate vaccination by order of the public health department. The list of ships given as "arrived" with so many and such a cargo of human freight, all bear strangely western names of Scotch Clans or Welsh towns.

The foreign news is partly taken from the *Weekly Times* of London and tells of Germany's payments to the Allies, the Soviet republics in the Caucasus, the condition of Albania, the coal strike in Britain, the treaty with Japan, new troubles in Silesia and Bulgaria, ending with a half column on the American Navy and the control of the Pacific!

Characteristic of this Meccan bi-weekly which calls itself "a religious, political and social newspaper," is the carefully printed "*Prayer Time Table*" which appears in each issue. It shows sunrise, noon, sunset, etc., for Mecca latitude and the exact time to the minute for the five ritual prayers.

With all its limitations *The Kibla* is a sign of the times, a harbinger of a new day of liberty.

With a press at Mecca and automobile service from Jiddah—perhaps airplanes—who would dare prophesy at what distant date the messengers of the King may find their way to the Kaaba as pilgrims of Jesus who have found the true Beit-Allah in His loving heart.

Along the Tigris River

REV. H. A. BILKERT.

CAN anyone in your village read?"
"No. There was a boat got stuck here one time and there was a religious chap on that boat who came and read to us from a Koran. But he read something about 'the sun when it grows small and the moon when it grows large' and we said he must be crazy, so we threw his book in the river."

This conversation took place in one of the hundreds of little villages which line the banks of the Tigris River. I was on a trip up the river and had sent Ali, the colporteur, to this little hamlet to see if there was any possibility of distributing any Scriptures among the



THE SERAI OR GOVERNMENT OFFICES AND MOSQUE AT BAGHDAD

people. But I imagine the conversation could have been duplicated in any one of the many villages through which we passed. These people are the farmers of the country. They belong more or less to the land, which, in turn, belongs to the large land owners of sheikhs. Their whole life is wrapped up in the rise and fall of the river and the winter rains, on which their crops depend. They have small flocks and herds and these, with their crops, represent their interests in life.

Their economic status is very low. Most of them are in virtual slavery to the sheikh who owns the land through their indebtedness to

him. If they wish to move they must get their new landlord to settle their debt with the old one and so merely change masters. The villages are very picturesque with their black goathair tents, much like the "tents of Kedar" of the Psalmist's day. The settlements vary in size from half a dozen tents to those larger ones, especially the villages of the sheikhs themselves, which may have a hundred or more. They comprise a little world in themselves and for many, especially the women, are the only world they ever know.

In a trip of eighty miles up the river there are also two small towns, Kumait, of about five hundred population and Ali Gharbi, about twice that size. In Kumai I saw an exhibition of native justice. We were sitting in the mejlis, or reception room of the local sheikh, when the policeman brought in two men who had had an altercation in the coffee shop. With them came most of the male population of Kumait and the mejlis was transformed into a court of law without further formality. The sheikh first asked one of the offenders what the difficulty was. He explained that he and the other culprit had formed a partnership for the purchase of a large quantity of dates. His partner now wanted to sell a portion of their stock without letting him share in the sale. To forestall such a sale he had placed an extra padlock on the storehouse door and pocketed the key. Result—a fight. The other man then started to tell his side of the story. But he had not progressed very far when Abdullah, as we will call the first man, interrupted. The sheikh was forgotten while Abdullah and Hassan indulged in a wordy battle, their voices rising higher and higher, their gestures becoming more and more violent and stopping just short of blows. No attention was paid to the sheikh, nor did he seem to mind.

After they had somewhat exhausted their vocabularies and threats the sheikh asked if there were any witnesses. Apparently the witnesses were the only ones who had not gathered at the court and so they were sent for. There is no oath administered to a witness in an Arab court but his testimony is liberally interpolated with oaths in the name of Allah and all the saints in the Moslem calendar. Some of the witnesses very evidently did not fancy their task and were very chary in their statements. Others were more vitally interested in the transaction and were perfectly willing to testify at length. In such cases after a few sentences to the sheikh they would be interrupted by Abdullah or Hassan and it would again become a vociferous argument between three instead of two. At times it seemed the whole company was participating. The Arab is most dramatic. He talks with face, hands and body as well as by words. And the gestures by which they placed the whole case, their honor, the honor of their father's house in the hands of "our father, Sheikh Nejem" must be seen to be appreciated. For a Westerner it would have been hopeless to have arrived at any clear decision mid such a hubbub. But after it had gone on for a certain length of time the sheikh had evidently heard enough to convince him where the truth lay. He called for silence, fined each of the culprits five rupees and ordered the dates given to Hassan. With

that the entire company seemed satisfied and with formal farewells departed to their several ways.

I found Kumait most friendly. We were given a splendid welcome on every hand. Ali had gone to the bazaar before me and when I arrived I found that he had disposed of nearly half of our stock of books and nearly every shopkeeper had a copy of some portion of the Scriptures. The advent of a Shaib and book-seller was an event in their little village, so at every place where I sat down I was at once surrounded with a curious crowd. Taking the books which different ones had bought I pointed out passages of special interest to them. So I was able to explain to them the parables of the Prodigal Son, the Good Samaritan and others. They listened most attentively and



THE MAUDE MEMORIAL BRIDGE OVER THE TIGRIS AT BAGHDAD

marvelled at the splendid truths in the "Christian's book." In this way a large percentage of the people in the bazaar heard the message and it was quite as good as street preaching, a method we have not been able to use very widely in Arabia.

It was at Kumait too that I saw a scene which touched me very deeply. A large group of women were gathered at the river's edge and in the midst of the circle lay the body of a little child, perhaps a year and a half old. The babe had just died and they had brought it to the river for the customary washing before burial. The mother sat at the outer edge of the circle, manifesting what seemed to be real grief. But the other women showed no signs of grief, nor yet of sympathy. Life is hard for these people. It is a struggle in which only the strong survive and little time or sympathy is lost on those for whom the

battle has been too fierce. But that little group on the bank seemed to my mind typical of the life of the people. Hard and stern with no time for the finer instincts of life nor any hope for those who sorrow. The Son of Man has never entered their lives to say, "Come unto me all ye that labor." Nor have they heard, "Suffer the little children to come unto me."

This trip was made in company with one of the Government irrigation officers. There is enough water in the river to make this whole land blossom as a rose and to make it again the great grain-producing land it once was. There are still traces of vast works and canals which intersect all the country between the Tigris and the Euphrates and brought water to fields which are now barren wastes. These are the reminders of the days of Babylonian and Persian supremacy before the Moslem hordes made the land a desert. The Government is trying to re-open many of these old canals and to make a larger percentage of the land arable. But the Arab does not take kindly to their efforts. He prefers to cultivate a little strip at the river's edge which he can irrigate by raising the water from the river in crude buckets, or by cutting a breach in the bund of the river and letting the current flood his little section. He does not realize the wealth which flows by his doorstep practically and which he might have for a minimum of effort. This was the season when the river was supposed to be in flood. But the floods had been very late this year and there had been very little rain. But while we were on the river the telegrams came down from the headwaters warning of the coming floods from the mountains above. Soon they arrived. Many of the farmers had ignored the warnings of the irrigation men and had failed to close the breaches they had made in the embankment. When the river suddenly rose five and six feet in a night they found their whole areas inundated and their crops endangered. In one case the flood widened a breach which one man might have stopped with a shovel to a breach of four hundred feet through which the torrent rushed like another river. And this too, it seemed to me, was symbolical. The land is barren and with grinding effort, which is far from commensurate with the reward it brings, the poor farmer wrestles a scant livelihood from the soil. While with almost no effort in another direction he could water twice the area he now has, more than double his crops, and have a rich harvest. And so in his life. With fastings, prayers, pilgrimages and endless ceremonies he seeks to wrest from a stern and unwilling God the right of heaven, while at hand is the Kingdom of God with its open doors and the Son of Man bidding him welcome. The mighty, wealth-bearing river flows by his impoverished farm and he heeds it not. The water of life is at hand for his thirsty and shrinking soul, and he knows it not.



The Influence of Christ on My Life

FADDAGH BIN MUHAMMAD.

(The writer has been for two years a student in the Basrah Boys' School. Pure Arab, aged twenty, he was a problem to his family because of the violence of his temper. In the age-old formula he said to his father, "Give me the portion of thy substance that falleth to me." He entered school on the proceeds in the autumn of 1919. Fanatical at first, then interested, he finally capitulated to Christ. I translate the following literally. It indicates the mental processes of a Moslem as the Gospel impinges on his mind. He is now a "new creature," and the change in his life as much of an enigma to his friends as his former violence and head-strong conduct.—*John Van Ess.*)

I WAS in the first part of my life in the densest darkness of ignorance. I believed there was no religion better than my own, nor faith better than my faith. When God wished to deliver me from this darkness He caused me to search and discern between the harmful and the helpful, between the night and the day. I verily believed

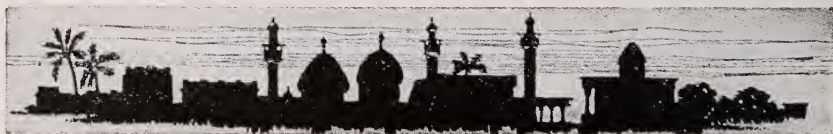


A TOUCH OF THE MODERN IN ARABIA

that the Quran was descended from heaven, the best and the truest book, to cling to which being man's chief duty; that the Torat and the Gospel were also descended from heaven and divine books, but taken from the Quran and entirely superseded by it. When God wished to clarify my eyes and show me the secrets of His truth He pushed me forward and helped me to discern the strong, pure Gospel, that by means of this study might be removed the hidden darknesses, and appear to me the truth, and

be removed this cloud from my thought and I became firmly established in His love, in body and soul. Among my beliefs was that man might take four wives, but the prophet should take one wife; but when I gave thought to that matter and followed the trace of it, I saw that the prophet had taken seven wives, nor was even satisfied, but when he saw a beautiful woman with her husband, and his heart inclined to her, she became forbidden to her husband and became lawful to him. I thought how the steer and the ass are satisfied with one mate, and a prophet not satisfied with tens of women! Now doth discern the possessor of sound knowledge between Jesus the Christ and that one of "such deeds." Thus first was my old conviction shaken and disturbed. Verily then Christ influenced my life in many ways. Among them His miracles and signs, clearly set forth in His book, and contrary to the book of the other in which is not so much as one miracle. Nor do I think I shall find in His book one verse contradictory to the other, nor one chapter to the other. Those miracles even His enemies testified to, though the enemies of the truth with difficulty testify to it. Then His sincerity of purpose with His people, and His sacrifice of Himself for them, and His love for them and His conduct in which was no crookedness at all. Nor could I close my eyes to the reason of the success of His Word, as said the prophet Isaiah, "So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth, it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it."

Most wonderful of all is His influence on my conscience, for one word of His has done what swords could not do, nor giants, for by His word He cleft the rock of my heart and opened it as a grave. So I see He does to the hearts of other men evil and wicked as I was. Verily it is His Word which makes of a wolf a meek and willing lamb, and of a ravenous beast a mild and docile creature. Such things rouse men from their sleep and make them seek forgiveness. It is His divine spirit like a clear, shining lamp which shines into and dispels deepest darkness, or like the pole-star to the mariner, guiding him to the right path, nay to life and truth, He is the remedy for the healing of the sick soul, the salve to the wounded heart, and comfort to the sorrowing spirit, riches to the poor, water to the thirsty. Thus was I led to Jesus Christ and to salvation. Long live the Gospel and the messengers thereof. In the name of the Redeemer Jesus Christ I pray this. Amen.



Advance Notice for the October, 1921 Number of *The Moslem World*

THE SWORD OR THE CROSS IN THE NEAR EAST

Those who would like a clew to the amazing tangle of social and political events in the Near East may find it right at hand in the October monthly of *The Moslem World* under the title, "The Sword or the Cross." The Editor, Dr. S. M. Zwemer, points out that the only pathway to peace is the via doloroso of sacrificial service.

Prof. Louis Massignon, of Paris, contributed the leading article on "What Moslems Expect" from Christendom after the war, while Prof. D. S. Margoliouth, of Oxford, lucidly explains the real character of the "Caliphate" and its influence on Pan-Islamic ideals.

A missionary from Arabia gives evidence that there still is intolerance in Inland Arabia and that this "intolerance" is not social but religious, being based upon "The Doctrine of the Arabian 'Brethren.'"

The number is rich in material on popular Islam: Dr. W. G. Frolich discusses "Nubian Marriage Customs." Mr. G. W. Swan, the pseudo miracles of Mohammedan saints which rival those of medieval Europe. Mr. W. M. E. Miller, of Persia, shows that animal "Sacrifice among the Shiah" is common and is an undoubted testimony to their belief in vicarious atonement.

In most encyclopedias and popular handbooks Mohammed is described as the "illiterate" prophet. Dr. Zwemer shows in a lengthy article that the evidence is nearly all the other way. Mohammed doubtless could read and write but his followers have preferred to call him "illiterate" to magnify the miraculous character of the Koran.

Mr. King Birge, of the International College at Smyrna, contributes a character study on the great Persian mystic Jalal-ud Din ar Rumi.

Taken altogether with "Book Reviews" and discussions of "Current Topics" this number gives the reader not only a broad outlook but a deep insight into one of the most crucial world problems of today.

Published by the Missionary Review Publishing Co., 156 Fifth Avenue, New York, N. Y. 35c a copy, \$1.25 a year.

Personalia

Dr. and Mrs. C. S. G. Mylrea, while making their headquarters at Seattle during the summer, were able to speak in several of the far western churches, which greatly enjoyed their visits. After spending most of the month of September in Michigan visiting Dr. Bennett and other friends, they arrived in Philadelphia early in October, where they are expecting to reside. They may be addressed at 47 East Mt. Pleasant Avenue, Mt. Airy, Philadelphia, Pa.

The Rev. S. M. Zwemer, D.D., Rev. James Moerdyk, and Rev. Dirk Dykstra have rendered effective service during the summer months making addresses at various Mission Fests.

The Rev. and Mrs. James Cantine, Dr. and Mrs. L. P. Dame, and the Rev. and Mrs. H. A. Bilkert have been enjoying a vacation during the hot summer months at Kashmir, North India.

The Annual Mission Meeting of the Arabian Mission was held at Karachi, India, September 17th to 24th. Our stations in Arabia are so far apart that it was found more practicable to have a smaller meeting of representatives of the Mission who were in India, thus avoiding the considerable expenditure of time and money required for the holding of the full Mission Meeting in one of our Arabian stations.

The Rev. James Cantine, D.D., has been requested by the British and Foreign Bible Society to look after their interests in Baghdad, as they have found it necessary to withdraw their agent from that city. This will give Dr. Cantine an excellent opportunity, through the colporteurs of the Society, to acquire a broader knowledge of the field and the people.

After many alterations in the sailing date, final arrangements have now been made for the return of Miss Charlotte B. Kellien to the field. She will be accompanied by the Misses Ruth and Rachel Jackson, and Miss Cornelia Dalenberg, under appointment to the Arabian Mission. Their passage is engaged on the SS. "City of Lucknow" of the American-Indian Line, which is scheduled to sail from Pier 2 of the Bush Docks, at the foot of 49th Street, Brooklyn, on October 18th.

Princeton Theological Seminary Library



1 1012 01465 2111

FOR USE IN LIBRARY ONLY

PERIODICALS

1900 1000 1000 1000 1000 1000

